、 *Fostering Young Children's Spirituality in Early Childhood Holistic Education in Hong Kong Educational Reform: Myth or Reality?*

Grace Lau

Assistant Professor in the Department of Early Childhood Education, Management Board member and Research fellow of the Centre for Religious and Spirituality Education, The Hong Kong Institute of Education, Hong Kong
Email: gracewlau@gmail.com

Abstract

In response to the wave of global education reform, the Hong Kong Government has initiated an educational reform to promote the child-centred approach to meet the changing society in the recent ten years. The Holistic Child-centred Educational Approach which enshrine a distinct kind of spirituality of interconnectedness is considered as Quality education. In order to foster the holistic curriculum in young children, the Government has recognized the values of play in the ECE informal curriculum and its allied pedagogy. Despite the Government's persistent attempts to foster the policy, the feedback from practitioners is less than satisfactory. Through a qualitative research with two preschools with religious affiliations, it is found that spirituality education has an important role to play in fostering the good lives of young children. Children are being 'equipped' with skills to deal with life adversity and handling the complex human relationships. A successful implementation of spirituality education however must rest on a clear understanding of the difference between the traditional religious education and spirituality education. A genuine understanding on the part of practitioners would increase the chances for a successful implementation of the ECE Educational reform promoted by the SAR Government. (193 words)

Introduction

It is often said that Education is the cornerstone of society, and the Early Childhood Education (ECE) can thus be regarded as the crucial initial

stage of this cornerstone. With the importance of ECE and its profound impact on the growth of children, the quality of ECE therefore needs to be maintained.

The Holistic Child-centred Educational Approach is considered as Quality education in the situation of Hong Kong.

The world is changing and so must the curriculum. In response to the wave of global education reform, the Hong Kong early childhood education sector has been rigorously promoting reform in early childhood education since some ten years ago. In the year 1999, the Hong Kong Government initiated an educational reform to promote the child-centred approach to meet the changing society. The old paradigm of teacher-centred curriculum is now considered out-dated and should give way to a holistic development underpinned by a child-centred ideology for Quality education.

In order to implement what is deemed as Quality education, it is worth noting what a holistic integrated curriculum and its underpinning philosophy is about. Holistic educational theory (Miller, 1991b, cited in Taggart, 2001) asserts that each human being is a complex, interrelated system of abilities and potentials and that a community is a democratic, diverse and communicative collection of human beings. Perceiving holistic education in this way, it is said that holistic education does enshrine a distinct kind of spirituality of interconnectedness (Taggart, 2001). The inclusion of Spirituality Education is therefore kept in line with what the ECE Education Reform is advocating.

Dimensions of Spirituality Education traced in Hong Kong Government's Educational Reform documents

In September 2000, the Hong Kong Education Commission published *Learning for Life-Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong*, proposing:

> "Moral education will be acknowledged as playing a very important role in the education system, and having an important social mission. Students will experience structured learning in moral, emotional and spiritual education to help them develop a healthy outlook to life."
> (Hong Kong Education Commission, *Learning for Life-Learning through Life: Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong*, September 2000, 35.)

Wong Ping Ho (2005) indicates that this curriculum reform document had established the importance of the spiritual dimension, [though it is being put under the category of Moral Education and Affective Education] in the curriculum reform policies, what is more, it also subsumed spirituality to the educational level reaching schools without religious background (Wong Ping Ho, 2005). In this concern, Hyde (2006, p.21) has indeed quoted what Groome (1998) says that, "it is more accurate to call ourselves spiritual beings who have a human life than human beings who have a spiritual life (Groome, p.332)". In this way, the spirituality of human being could then be recognised and that education should not be confined to Religious school nor to be taught as a subject. It is base on the rationale that if a child is to be developed holistically, the spirituality development of the child should be fostered through the integrated curriculum.

Along with the emphasis on adopting the 'child-centred' concept of children's learning, the Guide to the Pre-primary Curriculum issued 2006 recommends an integrated approach in designing pre-primary education curriculum so as to enhance the holistic development of young children.

The 2006 Guide accentuates the adaptability of the curriculum in the ever-changing twenty-first century society, in which flexibility, openness and coherence of the curriculum framework are encouraged according to the global educational trend. In order to foster the holistic development of children, the four developmental objectives, namely "Physical

Development", "Cognitive and Language Development", "Affective and Social Development" and "Aesthetic Development" are the cores of the curriculum framework which can be implemented through six categories, "Physical Fitness and Health", "Language", "Early Mathematics", "Science and Technology", "Self and Society" and "Arts". These six learning categories are entwined and influential to each other. To achieve an effective curriculum reform, the schools are required to adopt an integrated teaching, merging different learning areas into series of teaching activities under the same theme (The Curriculum Development Council, 2006). According to what the new curriculum guide has emphasized, the development of children's spirituality could be found under the domains of "Affective and Social Development", "Aesthetic Development" as well as "Physical Fitness and Health".

In order to support the preschools to achieve the idealistic holistic development for young children in a practical way, the Education Bureau considers Quality Early Childhood Education should "child development" and "informal child learning" model as the basic designing principle of the school-based curriculum. Practically speaking, the school-based curriculum should be designed according to the children's respective interests, needs and motives, in other words, the curriculum should be 'child-centred'. Informal curriculum is implemented in an integrated mode so that children can "learn" through "non-structural, irregular" play, enriching children's living experiences in the actual environment. At the same time, this integrated teaching model also allows children "learning by doing" freely and happily without pressure, which can help them to build up their confidence, self-determination and creative abilities. In this latest issue Guide, play is recommended as a learning strategy to be incorporated into different learning areas and to be used to plan the curriculum through an integrated approach (2006, p.41 cited in Lau, 2008).

The best way to foster the spirituality development in young children is through play since play is creative and integrated. The quality of play matches with the essence of spirituality. It is said that spirituality has its own form of creativity and imagination that allows one to explore contemplative practices. Activities can be planned and carried out in an educational setting that allows an approach to spiritual issues without

them being labelled spiritual (Bryza, Susan P. 2005)

The spirituality elements in Play have long been mentioned by many pioneering ECE scholars such as Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner (Montessori, Mario, 1984; Wolf, A. D. 1996; Wilkinson, R. 1996; Dillon, J.J. 2000) and by some prominent contemporary leading ECE scholars in play-based pedagogy, such as Ingrid Samuelson in Sweden. The integrated nature of play renders it a holistic form of education that fosters children's development in a way that the mechanical teaching of preset subject knowledge does not. A child-centred approach that advocates play falls intrinsically under the banner of 'holistic education' [HE] because underlying both is a view of the human being that is radically, fundamentally different from the dominant view in modern technological culture

Advocator of Spirituality Education and contributors to the child-centered approach to ECE, such as Froebel, Pestalozzi therefore suggest that spiritual development in young children is to truly respect children's play. In play, children should be given a great deal of freedom in choosing their own activities. Both Froebel and Pestalozzi asserted that education must start with the child's nature rather than the teacher's preconceptions. They stressed that creating beauty in the classroom also fosters spiritual development. This is to be enhanced through play. In short, if the focus of education is on the (holistic) development of the whole child (rather than just the intellect), the spiritual dimension of our humanness must be addressed.

In real play, children would create meanings for their undertakings. Similarly, the notion of spirituality is an important dimension of the human quest for meaning and purpose, it is not confine to transmit the narrowly defined Religious Knowledge/Education. Scholar like Dillion (2000) therefore says that the pairing of spirituality with religious concepts fails to recognize the true nature of spirituality. In terms of Spirituality Education (SE), what is needed is a global spirituality that is not to be confused with Religious Education (RE). In order to foster the spiritual development in young children, the ECE curriculum and its allied pedagogy must recognize the values of imagination, creativity, self-expression, unfolding, discovery learning, meaningful learning, experiential, affective education, exploration, no absolutes, self-initiative, self-actualisation, curiosity fulfilment, self-esteem, self-concept, non-repressive, self-realisation, reflection, relationships, insight cohesion, meaning, well-being, whole-language and whole person/holistic development (Watson, 2007; Bode, 1998).

One could realize without difficulties that the foregoing discussion demonstrates the interconnectivity of the concepts of child-centred education, holistic education (HE) and spirituality education (SE) as the three concepts share the same aforesaid vocabulary. In this connection, the practise of SE and its proposed curriculum and pedagogic practise, just like its partners, is meant to be applied to the whole ECE curriculum and is not restricted to the teaching of Religious Education in the traditional understanding of the term.

Wong (2005, p. 246) confirms that in a government policy reform document put out by the Education Commission (2000, p. 5), the word 'spiritual' has little to do with religion. This document in fact includes SE within the category of moral education. In short, the government policy document in 2000 and 2006 Guide extends the concept of play-based pedagogy to SE, but indicates that such education should apply to the entire curriculum, rather than be narrowly defined as RE or religious practice

Lack of consensus on the definition of Spirituality Education is a hindrance to implement Spirituality Education

Unlike the clear demarcation of the terms 'religious education','spiritual' and 'spirituality' in the United Kingdom, in that 'spiritual' has more affiliation with 'religious education', and 'spirituality' which is geared more to the humanistic progressive pedagogical values (Watson, 2007); depending on different interpretation of the term 'spiritual', different preschools in Hong Kong, irregardless of their mission statement as background, could have different application of this 'spiritual' aspect in their school curriculum and pedagogy. Hence, it could be said that the term 'spiritual' in Hong Kong does not have much to do with or in varying degree in applying the aspect of spiritual, spirituality or both. Due to the different interpretation in the aforesaid 'education blueprint' in the year 2000, the actual impact of implementing spirituality elements in the school curriculum is minimal. This is to echo with what Wong (2005) has mentioned in his paper, "The ambiguity of the term 'spiritual' in Hong Kong educational discourse: rhetoric and substance" about the discrepancy between the two education systems in Hong Kong as with its former paternalistic colonial ruling country, the United Kingdom.

Although half of the pre-primary schools in Hong Kong are run by Christian sponsoring organization, the chance that the teaching staff of the schools does not have such religious affiliation is great, though the precise figure of the situation has still need to be investigated. One could perhaps get a gist of information from the official estimate available in a survey conducted in 1995 (Wong, 2005) about the overall religious picture in Hong Kong: 60.2% of the respondents put themselves into the 'No religion' category, 15.3% 'Folk religion', 11.6% 'Buddhist', 8.4% 'Protestant' and 4.5% 'Catholic'. Under this syncretistic cultural, religious and historical situation in the post-colonial state of Hong Kong, it is not difficult to understand that the full implementation of a holistic curriculum in Hong Kong has still a long way to go. Unless the practitioners of the preschool sector have a genuine understanding of the 'holistic' curriculum and the notion of spirituality through the integrated activities of play, the effect of reaping the full benefit of a holistic curriculum is still dim. To achieve this end, to start with researching on young children's concepts of Spirituality would be feasible for preschools which have religious affiliations.

Research conducted to investigate the merits of the holistic Spirituality education through young children's play

Method

Interviews have been conducted for two schools sponsored by a Catholic organization and a Protestant organization respectively by a team of two researchers and two research assistants. Case study has been employed for collecting and reporting data. According to Elliott (1991, p. 87), case studies are a way of publicly reporting action research data. Case study has no set methodology. It is defined by its focus and the study of particulars.

Case study inquiry is used for this study as it is an ideal method to investigate the link between teachers' practical knowledge and the actions to be taken (Shulman & Colbert, 1988). This approach therefore has the

power to uncover the cause of the identified implementation that is embedded in the field. The research team will cross-examine the data analysis process to check its accuracy and trustworthiness.

The research team has participated in the free play activity in children's class, in the informal group activities of children's drawing and by talking with children as to understand the display of spirituality elements of the young children through the play activities. Tisdell (2003) divided seven different dimensions to elaborate the relationship between spirituality and education, and in the sixth dimension suggesting that: Spirituality concerns the way people construct knowledge through an unconscious symbolic process; while different art forms such as music, art and image represent this unconscious symbolic process, presenting specifically the conditions of spirituality. In addition, referring to the researches of Giesenberg (2007) and Mountain (2007) on painting as children's expression of their spirituality, this research project employs painting as a way to reveal children's spirituality during school visits.

Through children's paintings and their performances in free play activities, the research team interviewed the teachers and parents to further explore the conditions of children and the way how spirituality education could be implemented in the schools.

Findings:

Space does not permit the author to present each of the various texts of the research. However, those outlined below suggest the emergence of the characteristic which has highlighted the outcome behaviour children have manifested in the holistic 'Spirituality education.

Painting and the Expression of Children's Spirituality: Children's negative emotion is decreased by implementing the holistic Spirituality Education

Case study One : In the Protestant Kindergarten

Children's Expression of Anxiety and Fear towards Death

The painting of L. Y. T, recorded on 4th March 2009

> *Researcher:* *"Seeing a dog drawn in L. Y.T's painting, I asked him if he liked dogs in hope of bringing out why he would draw the dog and to share some of his thoughts. He told me that he kept a dog before, but it went to heaven. And then there was another boy called W. T.Y. talked to him, I asked Leung again how did he feel about the dog gone to heaven. He said he felt so unhappy and wanted to cry every time he thought of it."*

The following explanation shows how the teacher counsels the child by employing the informal pedagogy in the 'holistic' spirituality education.

In fact, the dog was gone when he was three, now he will be six years old in March, 2009.   He was much attached to the dog, had to hug it every day before he went to school. As he treasures feelings and relationships very much, I didn't tell him that the dog was gone immediately until I calm myself down first. I told him the dog had gone to play with its parents at the park whenever he asked about the dog. After a long time, he said he didn't want the dog to play with its parents anymore, but to come back to play with him. I could no longer lie to him when it was half a year later he still waited for the dog, so I told him the dog would not come back as I thought he would not understand the meaning of death. When he heard of this, he cried aloud and I cried with him. Afterwards, he didn't Ask again, but sometimes he would ask where the dog had gone, I told him it had gone to heaven, and he said he would pray to God to protect the dog. He asked me whether God would feed it. Anyhow, he could understand some of it."

Picture 1. The painting of L. Y. T., the dog in the picture was the pet of L.Y.T. called Boxer.

Case Study Two: In the Catholic Kindergarten

Children's Expression of Personal relationship with family members

The painting of H. S.T.
(Data recorded in a Catholic Kindergarten on 1st April 2009)

The following explanation shows how the researcher solicit the spiritual elements in the child by employing the informal pedagogy in the 'holistic' spirituality education.

Researcher: "Her paintings are beautiful and colourful as she painted carefully with details. We only had half an hour for her to paint and to talk with her, but she could still use her time and painted vividly. I asked her to draw people cared her most by her side; she drew clearly, including herself, her mother and father. I asked her again whether her father was thin as she drew her father thin. She answered no, drawing a thin father only because there was not enough space, if it's enough she would draw fatter. It appears that she is very attentive to details. Seeing the pretty clothes drawn for herself in the painting, I said there are five colours on her clothing, she told me she likes colours, reflecting her happy and optimistic character and she often thinks of her parents. Actually I had given her a topic to

draw when I asked her if she had ever been sick and who would take care of her at that time. She told me that her mother would take care of her in every possible way, bringing her to see the doctor and giving her pills on time. I asked how about her father? She said her father was busy so he didn't have much time for her, but if she needs anything or when she was sick, he would also come to take care of her. I asked again if she would play and watch TV with her father, she admitted and she loves to play computer games with her father. Her father is good at using computer so that he could bring her a lot of Disney cartoon pictures and she likes 'Cinderella' in Disney."

Picture 2 The painting of H. S. T., depicting her parents taking care of her when she was sick.

Discussions and Implications

As could be seen in the findings of the two case studies, spirituality development is an important element in fostering the Holistic development of young children advocated in the New Paradigm of ECE reform. One could observe the presence of "Spirituality" in the two children. In short, spirituality evolves around a deeper sense of self. This sense of self goes beyond ego and is translated into a set of values and beliefs that would help the young children to confront life adversities with calmness and an understanding. Apart from that, the data also suggest that Spirituality in education has focus upon harmony and tranquillity for the individual. Spirituality can imply a sense of co-operation that approaches every being with a sense of value (Bryza, 2005).

Nevertheless, with the purported strong support by the government through its various policies documented over the last ten years and the continued resources being poured into ECE to promote the holistic child-centred 'spirituality education', it is only surprising to find that the percentage of schools actually implementing the reformed curriculum remains low. This observation is borne out by data collected in a survey of a group of school principals conducted in May 2008.   It reveals that although the principals know very well what is required of them in the proposed curriculum framework and the application of its pedagogy, owing to their personal ideologies, cultural and religious beliefs, they are not seen to be abiding by what is required of them.   <u>It could be due to a misunderstanding on the part of the practitioners by not realizing the relationship between Religious Education; Spiritual Development and holistic education.</u>

Clarification on the meaning of "Spirituality Education" and its relationship with implementing ECE reform in Hong Kong is needed

<u>As claimed by many academic disciplines that it is indeed erroneous to describe spirituality as being the exclusive property of any one particular religious tradition.</u>   There is, in fact, a clear distinction between spirituality and institutional religion is needed (e.g. Erricker, 2001, Priestly, 2002; Scott, 2001, Tacey, 2003). <u>A misunderstanding of the meaning of "Spirituality Education" with "Religious Education" would hinder the implementation of education reform.</u>   Through literatures review and the findings in this paper, one could conclude that Spirituality Education is closely related with humanistic education and holistic education. Spirituality education shares similar elements with that of liberal studies, in which the concerned areas and aspects of knowledge are widespread.   Hence, it is not limited in promoting Religious Education.   And pedagogies adopted in Spirituality Education mainly emphasize diversified and critical thinking. The rationales behind spirituality education are closely related with that of humanistic education and holistic education.   In this connection, spirituality education has no direct relation with Religious Education which emphasizes direct transmission of religious dogma through subject-based teaching.

According to advocator of spirituality education, the essence of good lives could be fostered by spirituality education instead of the subject-based religious education, though the merits of the latter is also recognized.

Andrew Wright (2008, p.162) when arguing what kind of education would address questions of ultimate truth in the classroom has quoted Hirst's idea to illustrate his notion of good lives, "Hirst recognizes that the pursuit of good lives cannot be separated from key ontological and metaphysical questions about the nature of reality.   This might suggest a traditionalist' subject-centred' education that has little in common with the concerns of progressive 'child-centred' educators to enable pupils to live good lives….. The pursuit of truth is not merely about the acquisition of value-free factual knowledge: such a limited view is 'bedevilled by myths of an empiricist nature' (Hirst, 1969, p.147).   Rather, it includes the exploration of aesthetic, moral and spiritual values, and of our place in the universe.   Hence the pursuit of truth is necessary if we are to learn to flourish as human beings, since it aims at "freeing the mind to function according to its true nature, freeing reason from error and illusion, and freeing man's conduct from wrong' (Hirst, 1965, p.115, cited in Wright, 2008, p.163).   Despite having originally identified religion as a form of knowledge, Hirst later withdrew the claim: if 'there are no agreed public tests whereby true and false can be distinguished in religious claims, then we can hardly claim that we have a domain of religious knowledge and truth" (Hirst, 1974, p. 181; cf. Cooling, 1994, p.19, cited in Weight, 2008. p.163).

On the other hand, some writers have maintained that spirituality ought to be addressed through the religious education curriculum, in particular for those faith schools where the Christian narrative forms a source of authoritative wisdom to be handed on to its students (Hyde, 2008). For these faith schools, the teaching of spirituality without making reference to the revealed biblical knowledge might present a challenge for religious educators in faith context who attempt to pass on a particular faith tradition.   Hence, Hyde (2008) has borrowed Ota's notion (2001) in suggesting the responsible partnering of the religious programmes and the nurturing of spirituality of students.   If agued in this way, the author just wonders whether the problem of misconceptions between the dispensation of Religious Education and Spirituality education be further

aggravated in the case of Hong Kong? The author of this paper therefore wish to suggest that prior to any satisfactory pair-up of Religious Education and Spirituality Education, there is the urgent need to clarify the difference between the two.

Conclusion

The findings of this research paper suggest that the pursuit of Spirituality Education does indeed have an important role to play in enhancing the good lives of young children. A successful implementation of spirituality education must rest on a clear understanding of the difference between the traditional religious education and spirituality education. With an understanding of the relationship of the child-centred humanistic education, holistic education and spirituality education, the education reform advocated by the SAR Government could be better implemented.

References

Bode, B. (1998). Evaluating a personal knowledge of the nature of learning. In P. A. Kienel, O. E. Gibbs, S. R. Berry, (Ed.). *Philosophy of Christian School Education* (pp. 187). Colorado Springs, CO: Association of Christian Schools International.

Bryza, S.P. (2005). Nurturing Children's Spirituality in Schools. Unpublished PhD dissertation to the University of Denver.

Cooling, T. (1994).   *A Christian Vision for State Education: Reflections on the Theology of Education*.London, SPCK.

Dillon, J.J. (2000). The spiritual child: Appreciating children's transformative effects on adults. *Encounter,* 13(4), 4-18.

Education Commission. (2000). *Education Blueprint for the 21st century: Learning for Life, Learning through Life—Reform Proposals for the Education System in Hong Kong.* Hong Kong: Hong Kong Special Administrative Government Printer.

Elliott, J. (1991) *Action Research for Educational Change,* Open University Press: Milton Keynes (published in Spain by Morata: Madrid).

Erricker, J. (2001). Spirituality and the notion of citizenship in education. In J. Erricker, C, Ita & C. Erricker (Eds), *Spiritual education. Cultural religious and social differences: New perspectives for the 21st century* (pp. 198-206). Great Britain: Sussex Academic.

Giesenberg, A. (2007). The Phenomenon of preschool children's spirituality (Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology 2007). A+Education, 166786.

Groome, T. (1998). *Educating for life: A spiritual vision for every teacher and parent.* New York: Crossroads.

Hirst, P.H.(1969). 'The Logic of the Curriculum'. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 1.2.,pp.142-158.

Hirst, P.H. (1974). *Knowledge and the Curriculum* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul).

Hyde, B. (2006), Mapping the Terrain: Describing Different Perspectives on Spirituality. *Journal of Religious Education, 54(2),pp.19-29.*

Hyde, B. (2008). Weaving the threads of meaning: a characteristic of children's spirituality and its implications for religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education. Vol. 30, No. 3, September 2008, 235-245.*

Hong Kong Curriculum Development Council (2006). *The Guide to Pre-primary Education*. Hong Kong: Curriculum Development Council.

Hirst, P.H. (1965). 'Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowldege', in Archambault, R.D.(ed). *Philosophical Analysis and Education.* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Lau, G. (2008) 'Rethinking the role of play and work in Early Childhood Curriculum and Pedagogy.' Hong Kong Journal of Early Childhood, Vol. 7, No.1.,pp63-72.

Miller, R. (1991b). Holism and meaning foundations for a coherent holistic theory.

Holistic Education Reveiw, 4(3), pp. 23-32.

Montessori, Mario (1984). "Dr. Maria Montessori and the Child" in *The Spiritual Hunger of the Modern Child: A Series of Ten Lectures*. Charles Town, WV: Claymont. (The lectures published in this volume had been given in London in 1961.)

Mountain, V. (2007). Educational contexts for the development of children's spirituality: exploring the use of imagination. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality, 12* (2), August 2007

Ota, C. (2001).   The conflict between pedagogical effectiveness and spiritual development in Catholic schools.   In *Spiritual education. Cultural, religious and social differences: New perspectives for the 21st century,* ed. J. Erricker, C. Ota, and C. Erricker, 260-75. East Sussex: Sussex Academic.

Priestly, J.. (2002, July).   The spiritual dimension of the curriculum: Can it be assessed" A paper presented at the 3rd International Conference on Children's Spirituality, King Alfred's College, Winchester, UK.

Scott, D. (2001). Storytelling, voice and qualitative research: spirituality as a site of ambiguity and difficulty.   In J. Erricker, C. Ota & C. Erricker (Eds.), *Spiritual education. Cultural, religious and social differences: New perspectives for the 21st century* (pp. 118-129).   Great Britain: Sussex Academic.

Shulman, J.H. & Colbert, J.A. (Eds.) (1988).   The intern teacher case-book. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, Educational Research, and Development/ Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education.

Tacey, D.(2003). *The spirituality revolution: The emergence of contemporary spirituality.* Australia: HarperCollins.

Taggart, G. (2001). Nurturing spirituality: A rationale for holistic education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 6(3), 325-339.

Tisdell, E. J. (2003). *Exploring spirituality and culture in higher and adult education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Watson, J. (2007). Spiritual development: Constructing an inclusive and progressive approach. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 28(2), 125-136.

Wilkinson, R. (1996): *The Spiritual Basis of Steiner Education*. London: Sophia Books

Wolf, Aline D. (1996). *Nurturing the Spirit in Non-sectarian Classrooms*.

Hollidaysburg, PA: Parent Child Press.

Wong, P. H. (2005). The ambiguity of the term 'spiritual' in Hong Kong educational discourse: Rhetoric and substance. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 10(3), 243-261.

Wright, A. (2008). 'Liberal Religious Education and the Pursuit of Truth. *Panorama: Intercultural Journal of Interdisciplinary Ethical and Religious Studies for Responsible Research*, vol. 20, Summer/Winter.